DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 348 853 FL 020 473

AUTHOR Cote-Moran, Claudette
TITLE Classroom Activities: Increase the Challenge.
PUB DATE 91
NOTE 16p.; In: Acting on Priorities: A Commitment to Excellence. Dimension: Languages '90. Report of Southern Conference on Language Teaching; see FL 020 470.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Teaching Guides (For Teacher) (052) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Class Activities; Classroom Techniques; *Cultural Awareness; Difficulty Level; *Games; *Grammar; *Interpersonal Communication; Puzzles; Second Language Instruction; *Second Languages; Small Group Instruction; Student Motivation; *Vocabulary Development

ABSTRACT

Four classroom activities for second language learning are described. They include games and other exercises designed to enhance vocabulary development, review grammatical structures, encourage conversation on a variety of topics, and introduce cultural elements into instruction. All use materials that are readily available, and all are intended for use in either small groups (two to four students) or large groups (the entire class divided into two teams). For each activity, required materials, preparations, object of the game, specific procedures, and additional applications or adaptations are provided. The first, modeled after the game of snakes and ladders, is designed to help students use and synthesize content material. The second, using the principle of the game of checkers, can be used to review information about two countries. The third, played like tic-tac-toe, five-in-a-row, is a fast-paced activity designed to review and reinforce vocabulary and grammatical structures otherwise seen by students as tedious and boring. The fourth is a puzzle using fairy tales dissected into sentences, intended to reinforce basic vocabulary and to enhance learning through contextual meaning and repetitive use of the language. (MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Frank Medley
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC).

ED348853

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES: INCREASE THE CHALLENGE

Claudette Côté-Moran
Littleton Junior-Senior High School

Subject. . . verb. . . story. . . plot. . . culture. . . questions. . . answers. . . These topics are a common concern for foreign language teachers. How they are introduced, reviewed, emphasized, and clarified in each language classroom varies according to the method deemed most effective by the teacher. Whether a teacher chooses a traditional, non-traditional, or an eclectic approach to teaching, the primary objective remains the same--to help the students learn the foreign language.

Regardless of the method initially used to teach a topic, our ultimate goal is student performance that shows comprehension and assimilation of the material taught. Classroom activities that encourage student performance in the initial learning stages, require sustained student participation, and maintain a high level of interest throughout the activity are among the most effective in reaching this goal. Among the activities that contain all of these elements are childhood games. These games encourage the player to perform, require sustained participation, and have always elicited a high level of interest from the player. Some of the more popular games and activities can be easily adapted to foreign language teaching. With such adaptations, the focus is placed on the game/activity with the foreign

FL 020 473

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

language becoming the means by which the game is won. The language becomes secondary to the purpose of the game but of primary importance to complete the game. This serves a dual purpose. First, the students are motivated because they are playing a game (which is what they like to do). Second, the teacher is delighted because the students are speaking in the foreign language (which is what s/he wants them to do)! The students become involved from the beginning: Their sustained participation is required for them to play the game, and because of the competition between the teams, a high level of interest is maintained.

The games/activities explained below are among the most successfully used in the classroom and incorporate all of the elements mentioned above. In addition, each game/activity encourages individual contributions and group/team decision-making throughout the entire course of play. After the format of each game/activity is explained, an example of its use in the classroom is described.

All of the games/activities presented use very basic materials that are readily available. These materials include:

1. file folders
2. file cards (4 in. x 6 in.) in many colors
3. felt tip markers in many colors
4. glue stick
5. construction paper
6. dice (regular 6-sided dice)
7. optional: clear contact paper or laminating machine.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

These activities are designed for use by small groups (2-4 participants) or large groups (the entire class divided into two teams). The activities are discussed and explained in their entirety including materials needed and preparation prior to classroom use.

ACTIVITY ONE: SNAKES AND LADDERS

Materials Needed:

1. One game board modeled after the board of the children's traditional game *Snakes and Ladders* (change the title to *Serpents et Échelles for* French classes, *Culebras y Escaleras* for Spanish classes, etc.). This board should have 100 squares numbered 1 to 100.
2. Game pieces for each player. The piece can be a cardboard circle, bolt, or playing pieces from other games.
3. One die.
4. One packet of 100 questions numbered from 1 to 100.
5. One answer key.

Preparation:

1. Copy enough game boards for the number of groups that will be playing.
2. (Optional) Color the snakes and the title on each board.
3. Compile 100 questions on the topic of choice, and number from 1 to 100.
4. Prepare answer key to set of 100 questions.
5. Make one copy of questions and answers for each game board distributed.

Object of game:

To be the first player to reach the last square by exact count.

How to play:

Play is similar to the children's game in which you roll the die and move that number of spaces shown on the die along the numbered path. If you land on a ladder bottom, you immediately go to its top. If you land on the snake's mouth, you immediately go to the end of its tail and continue play from there. In addition to these basic rules. One player is designated the "Key" person. The player holds the questions and answer key to the game.

Each player rolls the die to get on the board. On the next turn, the player must answer correctly from the packet the question that corresponds numerically to the numbered square the playing piece is on. Once the question is answered correctly, the die is rolled and the piece moved that number of spaces to the next square. The play then

continues to the next player. If the question is answered incorrectly, the player must wait for his/her next turn to roll the die and attempt a correct answer.

As a player approaches the number 100 (the last square), s/he must reach it by exact count. If the die roll is larger than needed, the count must be completed by going backwards (e.g., 99, 98, 97,..). The player is still subject to the snakes across the top row.

Following these variations from the original game creates an excitement in the classroom: never knowing who will be swallowed by a snake or fortunate enough to rise to the top of a ladder. There is also a high interest in the questions being asked since the questions numbered 1-100 correspond to the game board squares numbered 1-100. These questions do not vary. The question to square number 14 remains the same no matter how many playing pieces fall on that square. It behooves each player, therefore, to listen attentively to every question that is asked in the event that his/her playing piece should land on that square during the course of play.

Application: Snakes and Ladders

This activity synthesized a varying amount of research material, enhances each individual's contribution to the acquisition and learning of the material, and is a great incentive for remembering a wealth of information otherwise soon forgotten. This activity works well in all settings. Choose a topic that can be divided into 4 or 5 sections, depending on the number of students assigned to the group. Each member chooses a different section to research or develop and returns to class with completed assignment on the date due. From each group students that

worked on the same section convene in a separate area of the classroom and compare notes with each other. Then, as a group, they make up 20 questions (if the topic was divided into five sections) or 25 (if there were originally four sections). Correct answers are to be included with all work. When all work is completed, there should be a total of 100 questions. The teacher then takes these questions and randomly orders them from 1 to 100, including the answer key for all questions. Enough copies need to be made for the number of groups participating in this activity.

One topic area easily adapted to this pattern is the research of a country (France, Spain, etc.). This topic can be divided into five sections: geography, history, music, art, and literature; or into four sections: geography, history, music and art, and literature. Each group member chooses a different section to research and returns to class with research notes. All those who researched Geography convene in one corner of the room, all those who did their research on History convene in another corner of the room, etc. Each newly-organized group now compares research notes, and, working from similarities in their notes, develops 20 to 25 questions (or true/false statements) based on the combined research efforts of everyone. All Geography questions should have a G in front of them; all History questions, and H, etc. The teacher collects each group's questions and statements and puts them in numberical order from 1-100 so that a Geography question is followed by a History question, followed by a Music question, then by an Art question, then a Literature question. In this way, each group's work is spread throughout the entire 100 questions. By prefacing each with the code letter (G= Geography,

etc.), the player is aware of the section from which the question is chosen.

While the teacher is organizing the student's group work into a packet of 100 questions, the original groups (that is, the groups in which each person selected a different topic to research) reconvene. Within each group, each member now has the 20 to 25 questions that relate to the section researched. Each group member is then directed to teach his questions and correct answers to another group member. All other group members should become somewhat familiar with these section questions as well. Ample time should be provided for learning this material.

On the day of play, the groups are divided into two teams, each with two members. These two members will be paired off with team members from another group. Each member of a team should be well-versed in at least two different areas the class has researched. Technically a group of four would then have complete knowledge of the 100 questions in the packet used for play. The teams are then handed the game board, directions, and the question packet with answer key. If the answer key is attached as a separate sheet, players can take turns reading the question and checking the answers of an opponent. Otherwise a fifth person will be needed as the reader. Each player has a playing piece, however, as a team of two, each can help the other answer the question. Together the team members ideally know 100% of the questions since each researched and designed 25% of the questions and learned another 25% from a group member.

ACTIVITY TWO: CHECKERS

The following activity is designed for large group use (entire class). Adaptations for small group use are simple.

Materials needed:

1. One game board (bulletin Board size).
2. One map each (outlines) of two different countries.

Preparation:

1. Make a game board that is eight squares wide.
2. Each square should be about 4 in. x 4 in.
3. Beginning with the top left hand corner, every other square should be darkened.
4. Obtain and enlarge (or reduce) outline maps of two countries, e.g., France and Canada, Spain and Mexico, etc. These maps should be about 4 inches square.
5. Make 12 copies of each map.
6. Cut out each map along its boundaries.
7. Glue each map to a file card or construction paper background (4 in. x 4 in.). Each country should have its own color. (It is easier to identify the team's playing pieces on the board. The color is also used later in the game to identify the "kinged" pieces.)
8. Optional: Cover each map with clear contact paper or laminate each piece.

Object of game: To win by removing all of the opponent's pieces (maps) from the board.

How to play: Entitled French vs. Canadians (for French classes) or Spaniards vs. Mexicans (for Spanish classes), this game is played exactly like checkers.

Application: Checkers

This activity can be used for reviewing information and research concerning any two countries. Have student groups develop a series of questions or comments concerning the two countries. Once completed, the class is divided into two main groups, each representing a different country on the board. Each group selects a spokesperson whose responsibilities include ensuring that each team member has an opportunity to respond to the opposing team's question and, in turn, to ask the opposing team a question during the course of play.

When a team (e.g., French) is asked to answer a question or respond to a comment, the team's (Canadians) may collaborate and discuss whether the response is appropriate and acceptable. The (Canadian) team spokesperson informs the other team of its decision. If the response is acceptable, the (French) team is allowed to move a piece (map) on the board. If it is unacceptable, the team does not move a playing piece. Play alternates between the teams whether a correct and acceptable response is given or not. This keeps the game moving and the interest high as both teams try to respond properly in the attempt to conquer the opponent's pieces on the board.

As in the game of checkers, when a piece reaches the other side of the board, it is "kinged". This is

accomplished by turning the map on its blank side. Since a different color background is used for each country, the team whose pieces are now kings is easily identified.

This activity used with a conversational/response format creates a strong involvement on each student's part in comprehending the question asked and the message received, in making group decisions in regard to the appropriateness of each response, and in participating in each aspect of the activity for individual accountability.

ACTIVITY THREE: TIC-TAC-TOE, FIVE-IN-A-ROW

This fast-paced activity is designed to review and reinforce vocabulary and/or grammatical structures that are otherwise very tedious and boring from a student's (as well as a teacher's) point of view. It is described for large-group use but can be easily adapted to small-group use.

Materials needed:

1. One game board (bulletin-board size)
2. Fourteen copies of each playing piece.

Preparation:

1. Make a game board that is five squares long by five squares wide.
2. Each square should be about 6 in. x 6 in.
3. Choose two different designs that reflect the culture of the language you are teaching to use as playing pieces, e.g., loaf of bread and cheese (*pain et fromage)* for French culture,

sombrero and guitar (*sombrero y guitarra)* for Spanish culture, etc.

4. Cut out each shape and affix each piece to a colored background. Use a different colored background for each design, e.g. *pain* design on a yellow background, *fromage* design on a brown background, etc.
5. Optional: Cover each playing piece with clear contact paper or laminate each piece.

Object of the game: To be the first team to place five playing pieces in a row. These may be vertical, horizontal, or diagonal.

How to play: This gamae is similar to tic-tac-toe. Each team chooses its playing pieces (described above). Instead of placing three pieces in a row as in tic-tac-toe, the teams must place five in a row.

Application: Tic-Tac-Toe, Five-in-a-Row

Entitled *Pain et Fromage* for the French classes and *Sombrero y Guitarra* for the Spanish classes, the students in beginning levels make up a list of vocabulary words previously learned; students in advanced levels could do the same or review verb tenses and conjugations needing review. The teams will use this list to question the opposing team.

Each team chooses a captain, who is responsible for ensuring that each team member has an opportunity to respond to the opposing team's challenge word (maybe a verb) and who in turn asks a member to read from the team's list a challenge word for the opposing team to

answer. Upon giving a correct response to a challenge word, the team member places one of his team's markers (*pain* or *sombrero*) on the board. The placement should be a team decision. When the other team responds correctly, it too places its marker (*fromage* or *guitarra*) on the board in an effort to place five-in-a-row and/or block the other team from placing five-in-a-row.

Since it is very difficult if not impossible) to get five-in-a-row, excitement and hope encourage the team to win. There is much team spirit created, and there are many enjoyable moments learning (for some) and reviewing (for others) material that is otherwise dull and monotonous.

ACTIVITY FOUR: FAIRY TALES

This activity creates a high level of enthusiasm in the classroom. The activity reinforces basic vocabulary and enhances learning through contextual meaning and repetitive use of the language.

Materials needed:

1. A fairy tale depicted in many pictures taken from a children's coloring book of fairy tales. This book should have a few simple sentences printed on each page.
2. A translation in the target language of the tale taken from the pages of the coloring book version.
3. Story of the fairy tale cut into many sentences or sections.
4. Envelopes in which to place the sentences.

Preparation:

1. Translate the story by using simple vocabulary for each page of the story. It may be necessary to add some words.
2. Copy each picture and omit the English sentences on the page.
3. Cut each story into sections (or by sentences for Advanced classes) so that each picture has a story strip (or strips) associated with it.
4. Place each set of story strips into its own envelope. You will need as many copies of the story (cut and placed in envelopes) as you have groups in the class.
5. Develop an appropriate short quiz based on the story.

Application: Fairy Tales

This activity can be used with any fairy tale. Some tales lend themselves to certain linguistic structures more than others (e.g., *The Three Little Pigs* for ordinal numbers, *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* for comparative and superlative degrees of adjectives). Whatever tale is chosen, the class is guaranteed to be excited with the exercise. The teacher can be certain that a great deal of language is being spoken and learned.

The story pictures should be hanging in correct order on the wall. Each group of 3 - 4 students is handed an envelope and directed to deal the strips of paper to each member of the group. Each member individually and silently reads his/her strips and attempts to put then in order according to his/her understanding of the strips and

the pictures hanging on the board. When all have completed this part of the assignment, each person reads to the group the strip he has identified as the first in the series of strips on his desk. The group then decides which strip is the first (according to the pictures hanging on the wall), which is second, etc. Discussion should proceed in the foreign language.

There should be plenty of repetition of sentences and vocabulary as the students discuss the order of the strips. When all teams have finished, the team finishing first goes to the board and reads the story picture by picture. One team member should read the strip while another, (using a pointer), points to the picture. If the order is incorrect or if the pointer is not placed on the correct picture while a story strip is being read, any team may challenge the presenting team. The second team then has the opportunity to read the story to the class while the class follows the sequence on its story strips. The class also has the opportunity to challenge the team now presenting. The fairy tale allows for three skills to be use concurrently in the class period: listening, speaking, and reading. These skills are constantly reinforced during the group and class activity. The students are eager to be the first to sequence the strips correctly with the story and again to listen to their classmates as they read the sequence to them.

After a group has read the story correctly, a short quiz can quickly check comprehension of the story and the vocabulary used in the story. The quiz could be as simple as requiring the students to sequence ten randomly ordered story strips pre-selected by the teacher. These strips should contain the vocabulary words from the story as well as main events in the story.

For writing practice, lower-level students can be assigned to write a brief summary of the story by using the vocabulary learned in context. Advanced-level students can rewrite the story by (a) altering the ending, (b) adding characters, (c) changing the situations, (d) adding more details, or (e) can translate another story, or (f) can write and illustrate their own fairy tale.

All of the activities presented here review vocabulary, grammatical structures, conversational topices, cultural elements, etc., in a variety of ways. It is important to remember that variety in presentation or review of material is needed. In addition, devising a means of focusing the review on other ends (such as winning a game) is essential to make the reason for learning and remembering the material a useful and purposeful activity. Students respond enthusiastically to these activities because they share the common elements of excitement, purpose individual contribution, and group support in decision-making.